1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

585 769 782 for the victims of smallpox. If family traditions also tell of those shot, not in war, but as prisoners, perhaps, a candle is lighted for them outside the cemetery wall. Though the couple may perform this ceremony together, each makes this request of the dead of his or her own family as the candles are lighted. This call on the dead is repeated several days after the marriage or later, when candles are again lighted.

591 583 585 769 The sole exception to the performance of these rites before the new household is begun occurs in those cases of *plaçage* where a girl continues to live at her own home. This is rare, however, for the house of a man is usually built near that of his father, and he takes his wife there. But if special circumstances dictate otherwise, the ceremony of notifying and pacifying the family deities may be deferred, though a man must eventually present every woman with whom he lives to his family gods and in turn must be presented to the gods of the woman's family. In similar fashion the dead of both families must be adequately notified.

585 [777] [796] [583] Marriages rarely take place in the months of November and December, the former being disliked because it is "the month of the dead," during which All Saints' Day occurs, and the latter because it ends the year. Except for the Church wedding and less elaborate festivities to celebrate the event, the rites which mark a *plaçage* mating do not greatly differ from those which mark a legal marriage, which may be described in outline. The favorite day for Church marriages is Saturday, "the day of the Virgin," and the time for the ceremony is always early morning, before the heat of the day has set in. If the home of the girl is some distance from Mirebalais, the party come to town the preceding day, the girl spending the night with some friend. Otherwise the bridegroom, accompanied by his relatives and friends, goes to the house of the girl early Saturday morning. Before the couple leave the [782] [782] home of her parents, water must be thrown on the ground in front of them, and also sprinkled by them before the en-

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been largely lost in the peasant culture, possibly because of a prudence dictated by conditions of life wherein evidences of the possession of wealth — certainly in the case of a peasant — were an invitation to those who would despoil him. Only when a family of position gives a ceremony, or when one of its members is married or dies, is the lavishness of its preparations such as to suggest the importance of its place in the community. This does not hold for the individual. Personal ostentation is the more strongly inhibited by the belief that another's envy may bring ill fortune to the one against whom it is directed. In Mirebalais it has almost become a byword that the really substantial citizens look as though they were the poorest. This tradition in no way interferes with the preoccupation with adding to one's possessions, or with the desire to exert the power and enjoy the position that go with a command of large resources, or the will to pass on as large an inheritance as possible to children. In their origin, such drives can be ascribed neither to Europe nor to Africa, nor, for that matter, to the experiences of slavery, but rather to the interplay of two homologous patterns of culture that has produced the economic system and the economic motivations found in Haiti today.

In the matter of land tenure, and in attitudes toward private property, African tradition has disintegrated almost completely. Under the characteristic West African form of land tenure, land of a tribe is vested in the tribal head, who allots it to families for use. Trespass upon it is not permitted while it is under active cultivation, and the produce of the land is the property of the one who has worked it. Only palm trees are privately owned by those who have planted them; otherwise land that goes uncultivated for a longer period than is necessary to restore its fertility may be re-allotted. In some regions land worked by an individual is his because of his membership in a large relationship group, whose ownership derives from the power of its ancestors who had lived on this

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

588 does not marry his horse. People marry people. Loa marry loa. A man
588 may have a compact with a loa. That is not a marriage. Some of the
184 things that are going on down there in the Plain are not right. They are not the old way. In the old days we did things differently. We did not always run to the houngan. The grand famille knew how to talk to the loa. Up here we don't do things the way they do them down below in the city. People marry people. Loa marry loa."

588 Nevertheless, the practice in the neighborhood of Port-au-Prince and
776 the Cul-de-Sac Plain is for mystic marriages to take place when deemed
[184] useful, essential, or unavoidable. Foremost among the loa involved in these rites is Èzilie Wèdo, the "pure" one, the deity of love, sometimes identified with the Virgin Mary. Other loa known to have taken part in mystic marriages are Damballa, Ogoun, Ayida, Agwé, Gèdé Nimbo or one of his brothers, Cousin Zaka, and Général Clermeil. All these loa—significantly, I think—have clearly defined personalities; much is known about their character and behavior, their likes and dislikes.

588 A man married to Èzilie has special obligations to her for the dura-
[834] tion of his life. On certain days (especially Thursday, which is sacred to this deity), the mortal "husband" may not have sexual intercourse, even though he has a human wife.

588 Circumstances leading to a mystic marriage vary widely, but in each
755 case it is a cult priest who determines whether the rites should be
793 held. Perhaps a person has been afflicted with a series of illnesses or mis-
776 fortunes. He goes to his houngan, who begins a series of communications with the client's loa or with his own. Sometimes many loa are consulted before the desired information is available. Eventually it is determined that a certain deity, for reasons which may or may not
[753] be clear, wishes to have nuptial ties with the client. The illnesses or mis-
[777] fortunes that have been sent are a means of informing or warning the person concerned.

Sometimes the houngan relies on well-established divining methods to ascertain the cause of the difficulties. He may employ the *gembo* (a shell that slides on a string), ashes, or small shells that are thrown on
[787] the ground. Or he may rely on possession by a loa to provide the information.

If it is found that a loa is demanding marriage, arrangements are then made. The rites that follow may take place in a hounfor or at the house of the human bride or groom. Both a prêt' savane and a houngan officiate.

588 The person directly involved, like the loa, usually has something to
554 gain from a mystic marriage. For one thing, he can reasonably expect

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

house. A round, polished Indian stone is occasionally used as a *garde habitation*. And old people speak of a very powerful charm known as a *gros arrête* which in former times was placed on the trail to protect entire villages or valleys.

Still another potent defensive charm is the *pouin*, which is the product of ritual magic within the cult temple. A pouin may be an actual bundle containing a formula of special ingredients; more often, it is invisible, consisting of magical forces unleashed into space by the houngan. There are many ceremonies in the hounfor devoted to the projecting of these magical forces. They are called *cérémonie pouin* or *cérémonie magie* and are dramatized by special cult songs and dances. Sometimes the magic ceremony is woven into a more generalized cult ritual. The powers of the pouin are regarded as wider and more potent than those of the arrête. Pouins are said to protect an individual or a group not only against other magic but also against natural phenomena and accident. A pouin may ward off lightning, for example, or protect one from falling trees or from shipwreck or drowning. But it is not solely defensive magic. It may bring success in fishing, or produce a good crop in one's garden, or aid human fertility.

Since the crops and the garden are the substance of life, much attention is given to their protection. An enemy may attack a man or his household through garden magic. He may bury a ouanga in the earth, to bring sickness or ruin. He may poison a tree by performing a special rite at its foot, and its fruits will then carry disease or death to the one who eats them. Or he may make a compact with the earth so that it will dry up and refuse to produce for the one who tills it. Against all these malevolent possibilities, as well as against common thieves, the Haitian peasant has many magical and practical resources. Some people are said to employ zombies as watchmen. These fearsome creatures will capture a trespasser and hold him for the owner of the field.[3] Or perhaps the owner will place special arrêtes in his garden. Occasionally a man will protect his fields by planting *piquettes* in the earth. The *piquette* is a piece of sharpened bamboo or hard wood. Its point is dipped into poison, and it is placed in the ground, sharpened end up. An unwary intruder who steps on a piquette may die of his wound.

To counteract the *maljok*, or evil eye, a man may procure from a bocor a special shirt made of wide strips of red, white, and blue cloth sewed together. This shirt, called a *mayo* or *manyo*, is worn for seven days if the *maljok* is a rather ordinary one. If the evil force is a particularly virulent one, however, the *mayo* will be worn as long as twenty-one

3 [Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," Journal of Negro History, October, 1940, P. 503. Cf. P. 351, Category 116.-- Analyst]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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789 generally through no wish of their own, have the uncanny ability to cause evil simply by a glance. One look is enough to do the damage. Although theory is a bit vague on this point, it appears that certain irritable spirits use the agency of the human eye to vent their spleen on mortals who are fortunate: good looks and strokes of luck act, consequently, as lodestones to the fateful glance. And where the [175] glance falls ill luck may spread, harming all within reach. In the days [304] of slavery people had such a fear of the evil eye that they did not hesitate to disfigure infants who at birth seemed to be particularly handsome and so likely to attract attention. Nowadays the practice • 777 is to avert the glance by making an *arrêt*. This "halt" may be either a 789 special charm worn on the person or else the mark of a half-moon done with a caustic vegetable substance on the cheek. As with Europeans who believe in the evil eye, certain specialists ply a lucrative trade through their reputation for effective charms against the maldioque.

Other charms may be mentioned. There is the *garde* which protects its wearer against evil of any variety—the near relative of the good-luck charm worn by thousands of "civilized" people. There is the *ouanga*, or *wanga*, compounded to achieve a special end, generally an evil one. Faine remarks that ouanga is

[192] A Créole word of African origin [signifying] a philtre or simple of a special kind, compounded by an *houngan* out of such diverse ingredients as a dead chicken, some grains of indigo and maize, amulets, pieces of money, asafoetida, etc., the whole contained in a half-calabash. . . . The Ouanga, placed in the home of an enemy, is designed to bring him bad luck even to the extent of giving him elephantiasis ("gros pied") when he has inadvertently stepped on the ouanga.[37]

The ouanga is the Haitian equivalent of the hoodoo, for through its influence one may (or so he believes) bring illness, misfortune, or death to an enemy. For every ouanga there is a garde, for every evil a cure. The art lies in finding out the nature of the ouanga causing harm, and then knowing exactly what to do to fend it off.

751 Historically the most interesting garde is that called a *drogue*, 789 which is thought to insulate one against wound by weapons or bullets. Reference has already been made to the utter abandon with which the Negroes, both at the time of the insurrection and later in

37. Jules Faine, *Philologie Créole* (Port-au-Prince, 1937), p. 319.